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Officials Deny U.S. Gave Data On ANC to Pretoria Regime

Associated Press

Secretary of State George P. Shultz said yesterday it was not true that the United States had given South Africa intelligence on the banned African National Congress (ANC), which is seeking to overthrow the South African government and end apartheid.

The New York Times reported yesterday that the administration funneled the information, including political intelligence and specific warnings of planned attacks by the group, to South Africa at least into the mid-1980s.

Shultz, testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said he talked by telephone yesterday morning with Central Intelligence Agency Director William J.

Casey and that Casey "told me categorically that was not true and had not been true" throughout Casey's tenure. Casey has been CIA director since 1981.

In responding to a question by Sen. Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.), Shultz said he had been authorized by Casey to make the denial public.

White House spokesman Larry Speakes also denied the report. "Not true," he said.

However, one former senior Reagan administration official acknowledged that communications intelligence on the group had been relayed to South Africa. "It all comes down to what you believe about the ANC," the official told The Times. "Our interests require helping the South Africans."

The newspaper quoted unidentified sources from the Carter and Reagan administrations as saying that the two countries had been exchanging intelligence information since the 1960s. They could not say when the White House began providing the Pretoria government with the information.

Data relayed during those years initially concerned Soviet shipping and submarine movements in the South Atlantic and Indian Ocean, the sources said. In exchange, Pretoria supplied the United States with information on Soviet and Cuban activities in the region, The Times reported.

Sources said many of President Reagan's senior national security officials took office convinced that the leadership of the ANC was dominated by pro-Soviet communists, and that providing Pretoria with information on the group was in the American national interest, The Times reported.